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ABSTRACT

The nature and quality of state colleges are discussed. State colleges are considered to consist of publicly controlled, four-year institutions other than those engaging in significant doctoral-level education, or those granting a majority of their degrees in a single program area. The state colleges are primarily comprehensive institutions placing major emphasis upon professional, rather than liberal arts, programs. The history of state colleges is traced, with attention to older colleges, multi-colleges, historically black colleges, and new colleges. Characteristics of state institutions are addressed, including involvement in a public bureaucracy and providing access to education. Attention is directed to personnel, facilities, and financial resources, which are dependent on the colleges' history, location, and size. Finally the issue of excellence is discussed, with attention to environmental and internal aspects of state colleges that may inhibit their effectiveness. External constraints include state/system coordination and control, funding provisions, and collective bargaining. Internal constraints include the status and expectations of faculty, and the background and preparation of students. Evaluating excellence at state colleges and short- and long-term evidence are also discussed. (SW)

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STATE COLLEGES

An Unsettled Quality

A Background Paper prepared for the Study Group on the Condition of Excellence in American Higher Education.

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> The state colleges and regional universities are America's most restless institutions of higher learning. Their history spans less than 150 years, but during that time they have, typically, played four changing roles: as post-high school academies, as normal schools devoted solely to the education of teachers, as four-year liberal arts colleges with strong technical emphases in teacher education, industrial arts, and home economics, and as comprehensive colleges giving also professional education in engineering and business administration and graduate work at the M.A. level. Some have become regional universities with research programs and Ph.D. degrees. And there still remains an unsettled quality about their functions, standards, offerings, faculties, and clientele. They continue to seek a brighter place in the academic sun. (Kerr, 1969, p.vii).

Clark Kerr's foreword to E. Alden Dunham's Colleges of the Forgotten Americans (1969) is as applicable today as it was when it was written fifteen years ago. Having for the most part completed the transitions in mission, program, enrollments, and governance forseen by Dunham, the state colleges are still relatively invisible, understudied, and not always fully understood or appreciated by legislatures, potential students, and other internal and external constituencies. They have just completed a turbulent era characterized by rapid growth, social and political unrest, significant alterations in program and structure, and insecure funding, and are now about to enter a period in which demographically induced enrollment declines promise continued disruption and discontinuity. It can be expected that their "unsettled quality" will continue into the forseeable future; it may in fact be an irresolvable consequence of the niche they occupy in the higher education system.

For the purposes of this paper, the population of "state colleges" is considered to consist of publicly-controlled, four-year institutions other than those engaging in significant doctoral-level education, or those granting a majority of their degrees in a single program area (see Note 1). In 1982-3, there were 377 state colleges representing 12 per cent of this country's approximately 3,200 institutions of higher

education (see Note 2). In total, their undrgraduate headcount enrollments in 1980-81 exceeded 2.04 million, equivalent to 22.4 percent of all undergraduate enrollments. and 36.6 per cent of undergraduate enrollments in all four-year colleges. They award approximately 30 per cent of all baccalaureate degrees. They have average enrollments of about 2,400 in institutions offering only undergraduate degrees, and 6,700 in state colleges offering diverse masters degrees as well, making them about twice as large as comparable independent institutions in these two categories.

The state colleges are primarily comprehensive institutions placing major emphasis upon professional, rather than liberal arts, programs. In 1980-81, 69 per cent of their degrees were awarded in professional areas such as education, business, health professions, computer science, and public affairs, and 31 per cent in the liberal arts. Only 36 state colleges (10 per cent) awarded more than half of their baccalaureate degrees in non-professional subjects, while 134 (36 per cent) gave professional degrees to at least three-quarters of their graduates.

Fifteen years ago, one out of every three degrees awarded by state colleges was in the field of education (Harcleroad, 1983); an additional but unknown number of students were also preparing for teacher certification, but received their degrees in the disciplines in which they were to teach. Although they still prepare 40 per cent of the nation's teachers, in 1980-81 these colleges awarded more degrees in business (22.8 per cent) than in any other single field, and education degrees declined both in absolute number and as a proportion of all degrees awarded (17.2 per cent).

While still predominantly undergraduate institutions, the state colleges are increasingly involved in graduate work at the M.A. level and several institutions award a small number of doctoral degrees as well. Most of these graduate degrees are in the field of education, but other professional areas such as business and nursing,

as well as a sprinkling of arts and science areas, are also represented. The colleges on average awarded 21 per cent of their 1980-81 degrees at the graduate level, with 69 offering no graduate work, and 47 having graduate degrees comprising one-third or more of their total degrees granted. Although 58 of the state colleges awarded doctoral degrees in 1981-2, their proportions were in almost all cases less than 1 per cent of degrees awarded, and in no case higher than 2.8 per cent.

History

Identifying any large group of institutions with a single category name may tend to focus attention upon their very real, but sometimes superficial similarities, while glossing over differences that may be less evident but more important. Reification of "state colleges" as a type can therefore mislead us into inappropriately assuming a homogeneity of individual institutions that in many cases are quite dissimilar. Merely comparing the history, traditions, programs, student body, and political environment of the oldest institution now considered a state college (The College of William and Mary founded in Virginia in 1693), with the youngest (the University of the District of Columbia, founded in 1975), gives some perspective to the wide range of characteristics of "state colleges." Equally as important, even colleges founded at about the same time, and in the same state, can be quite different.

To give prominence to the diversity of state colleges, this paper divides them into four subgroups; older colleges, multi-colleges, historically black colleges, and new colleges. These divisions are somewhat arbitrary, and many state colleges could be placed into more than one of them. In briefly discussing each group, the same caveats concerning the applicability of generalizations to individual institutions should be kept in mind.

Older colleges

These are institutions founded prior to 1950 (about half of them before 1910) that still essentially maintain a unitary collegiate structure, restrict themselves to undergraduate programs, and focus attention upon career and professional preparation. For most, their single initial purpose was the training of teachers, and they typically have moved sequentially through developmental stages as normal schools, teachers colleges with degree granting authority in various field of education, and more recently to state colleges that maintain significant commitments to education but that also offer degrees in other professional areas as well as the liberal arts.

Their educational tradition and linkages to the school systems from which in the past many drew their faculties often led to the development of college governance structures characterized by centralization, administrative dominance, and lack of faculty participation in decision-making. Even though enrollment in education programs may have declined, many colleges still maintain large numbers of education faculty, often with senior rank.

These institutions tend to attract a local student body with intellectual interests and abilities reflecting a cross section of the top two-thirds of the high school graduates in their drawing area, for whom low cost and propinquity probably prove decisive in the application process. Their parents are likely to view the institution as a safe haven preparing students for the world of work while providing an environment conducive to success and relatively free from the excesses of more cosmopolitan settings. Faculty are likely to be "locals," with strong institutional commitments and ties to the community. Of the traditional trinity of institutional purposes, the primacy of teaching is unquestioned, with service usually limited to activities in nearby communities and research eschewed almost entirely. The names of these older colleges are for the most part unfamiliar to persons outside their home

state.

Multi-colleges

These institutions share the same historical precedents as the older colleges, but during the period between 1955 and 1975 underwent a transformation of mission, complexity, and structure. Driven by significant enrollment increases, graduate work, liberal arts departments, and other professional schools were grafted upon an existing teacher education base. University aspirations were developed both by state master-planners who encouraged them and by the well-trained new faculty who were recruited to serve in them, but despite the common change of name from "college" to "university," authority to award the doctorate never materialized. The term "regional university" is often used to denote such institutions, although this term also can be used to refer to some non-public collees as well.

Vestiges of their teacher training history remain, but education programs at many of these institutions no longer play a dominant, or in some cases even an important, role. The rapid growth of the 1960s in arts and sciences, business, engineering, nursing, and other professional areas overwhelmed the older faculty still in place. The newer faculty brought with them new values born of the academic revolution, commitments to their discipline and college rather than to the institution, and a sense of their proper role in governance that were quite incompatible with the previous order. On some campuses, each September may have seen the faculty grow by a third or more. Opportunities to socialize faculty into the old traditions, to develop consensus over institutional purposes, or to weed out the incompetent were lost, and to a great extent the continuing unsettled quality of these institutions may be related to the consequences of this growth, as well as to the responses to external control to which the growth appeared to commonly lead.

The relatively nonselective admissions policy of most multi-colleges leads to a student body of modest academic accomplishment, but the size of the institution and its more specialized offerings permit the development of islands of intellectual ferment. Low cost, convenience, and occasionally the availability of a program not available elsewhere may remain the principal reasons for attendance, but some programs may also develop a regional reputation for quality that attracts the more able, and there is often a core of faculty anxious to encourage intellectual inquiry and a group of students eager to participate. In general, however, the climate of the campus is likely to relflect a "collegiate" culture, and to be predominantly concerned with career preparation, and with extracurricular activities.

Although teaching remains the major mission of these institutions, the expertise of a well-trained faculty and the expectations of local communities often combine to move multi-colleges towards significant programs of service which can take such forms as collecting and analyzing regional economic data, consulting on the development of new social programs, or technically evaluating local environmental policies. Some scholarly work is done, but on many campuses the role of research remains problematic. In some cases, state-wide master plans or governing board directives specifically restrict the involvement of the state colleges in research, and assign that responsibility to the state university. The ambiguity created on the one hand by the presence on campus of faculty who may in fact have been recruited because of their research interests, and on the other hand the lack of institutional research support, leads to tensions which become overt when debating mission statements, promotions and tenure policy , and similar matters.

Historically black colleges

Although often sharing a background concerned in good part with the training of teachers, these institutions have a different tradition and ethic justifying their

identification as a unique state college subgroup. Of the 34 historically black, public, four-year institutions located in 18 states (A National Resource , 1982), all but one are state colleges. Almost all of them were founded in Southern and border states after the Civil War in response to the need for literacy and vocational training for black people who were denied access to existing colleges. Until the last quarter century, these institutions were the main sources of black students earning baccalaureates. Even though a majority of black students now attend predominantly white institutions, the historically black colleges still produce 30 per cent of the degrees earned by black students in America.

Twenty years ago the historically black state colleges were characterized (McGrath, 1965) as small institutions with underprepared student bodies and extensive remedial programs, emphasizing professional education in general and teacher education in particular (the only white collar positions generally available at that time to black Americans). The faculty were without terminal degrees, administration was centralized and patriarchical, and facilities were inadequate. Emphasis was placed upon teaching, and service to the black community, particularly in the field of education, was considered an important part of institutional mission. Research was virtually unknown. Some dimensions of these institutions were similar to those of the older colleges, but they differed significantly from them both in lower levels of financial support, and in the extent to which they existed in an often hostile political and social environment that militated against change or conspicuous self-improvement.

Since that time, the historically black institutions have developed along the same lines as other state colleges, becoming larger and more complex. Support levels have improved, but many believe not to the level of comparable state institutions that have a predominantly white enrollment. The most serious problems of the historically

black colleges may be political rather than fiscal, however. Established as parallel institutions to offer "separate but equal" education in states unwilling to integrate their higher education systems, they now find their very existence threatened by court-mandated orders in 17 states to integrate what has developed as dual higher education systems. The role of the Federal Government in this situation is unclear, with Presidents of both parties pledging support and commitment to the preservation and support of black colleges on the one hand, and the Justice Department bringing suit to integrate black and white state college systems on the other. Clearly, the integration of the systems would mean an end to the distinctive climate and opportunities offered by these institutions, and would seriously diminish the richness and diversity of the higher education system.

New colleges

This category includes 88 institutions founded after 1950. Although some were developed as general-purposed institutions to meet increased enrollment demands, others were founded for three different articulated purposes. A number of new state colleges were developed with the expressed intent of responding to the "urban crisis." In some cases this referred to explicitly professional colleges specializing in curriculum areas preparing graduates for occupations presumably in short supply in the cities. In others, it meant institutions that would serve inner-city youth, thus creating a new kind of institution - the "predominantly minority" (but not historically black) college. A second distinctive type of state college included those developed with a special mission, in areas such as the arts, technology, or the environment. The third category included those institutions founded to experiment with the offering of new delivery systems, and/or the provision of services to clienteles referred to as the "new learners." In some cases, these institutions may offer no instruction, but rather serve to test and certify student knowledge obtained in other settings.

While these new colleges differed significantly one from the other, they all shared one critical, common characteristic: although they might choose to include teacher education in their curriculums, they were unrestrained by the teacher education programs and traditions that so greatly influenced the development of other state colleges. Some still retain their original innovative characteristics. For most, however, the value of starting with a clean slate has been significantly eroded, if not almost completely vitiated, by internal strife, state and constituency pressures to conform to standard procedures or programs, and the difficulty of sustaining innovation with minimal resources.

Values

The rapid enrollment growth of many of the state colleges, their development from a single unifying purpose to reflecting multiple and often incompatible purposes, and the increased societal expectations of the functions of higher education, have all acted to create a significant identity crisis for these institutions. As Weathersby (1983) points out, they are often easier to define by what they are not (not research institutions, not liberal arts colleges, not community colleges), than by what they are, because they have lost whatever distinctiveness they once possessed. "Such vagueness of purpose and mission has in turn led to confusion in the minds of students, employers, potential donors, and legislators about the identity, purpose, and priorities of these institutions" (p.26).

Given this problem of identity, as well as the differences in the various institutions which make up the sector, it is difficult to specify values that can be said to uniformly apply to, or that uniquely set apart all state colleges from, other institutional types. There are, however, general similarities in outlook probably

shared by a majority of the institutions in the sector. Three characteristics help account for whatever general attitudes may be held.

First, all members of the sector are under public control, and while the consequences of this fact for institutional practice differ on a state-by-state basis, there is no doubt that it creates an environment qualitatively and quantitatively different from that in the private sector. Among other things, state colleges are imbedded within a public bureaucracy that controls many administrative processes, they are constantly under public scrutiny and often must discuss sensitive matters under state "sunshine" or open meeting laws, and they often are pressed to respond immediately to new state public policy initiatives without being given an opportunity for full campus discussion and consultation. Second, as a consequence of their public status many of these institutions are caught in the middle of an often competitive system in which state college roles, prestige, influence and resources are defined in relationship to those of public research universities or "flagship" campuses on one side, and community colleges on the other. Third, most state colleges belong to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), an organization engaged in research, development, publication, and public information in support of its members (as well as non-members to whom they refer as "AASCU-like institutions.") AASCU meetings and publications are influential in articulating and sharing values in the sector.

To the extent that a state college sine qua non exists, it would probably be the concept of "access." The colleges proudly proclaim their role in serving blue collar, first-generation, middle-America students, and defend the importance of offering education to those not served by "elite" institutions. The concept of access is seen in perhaps its most elemental form at the historically black institutions which have traditionally admitted large numbers of underprepared students who were

victimized by an inadequate secondary school system. Even at many of the older or multi-colleges, however, barriers to admission usually have been and remain low enough to admit students graduating in the top two thirds or three-quarters of their high school class, with special procedures set up for dealing with students not meeting even this modest criterion.

Although the admission of underprepared students has probably always taken place at state colleges, recent concern about student performance and attrition rates has led on many campuses to major programs of developmental or remedial education. Publicity about these programs (many of which were probably initiated to support special admissions programs for minority students, but which are now seen as essential for large numbers of other students as well) has helped to confirm both on- and off-campus the image of the state colleges as democratic institutions concerned with the provision of equal opportunity.

Access assumes more than just relatively non-selective admissions requirements, however, and the state colleges strongly believe that higher tuition costs are increasingly becoming a barrier to college attendance. AASCU was instrumental in forming, with two other associations, the National Coalition for Lower Tuition in Higher Education, an "organized political effort to work effectively for low tuition, to make possible educational opportunity for all, ...to fight for higher educational appropriations, which are necessary to make low tuition and quality education possible." (Low Tuition Fact Book , 1983).

Faced with competition from community colleges which also support access and low tuition, state colleges are likely to point out to potential students the greater academic expertise of four-year college faculty as measured by their relatively higher proportion of holders of the doctorate, to suggest the advantages to a student of

remaining in a single institution for an entire program rather than suffering the discontinuities of tranfer, and to use comparisons showing higher completion rates and greater probability of achieving career goals for students in four-year, as compared with two-year, colleges (Astin, 1977). Challenged for students by public universities in the same state, they are likely to focus attention on their emphasis upon teaching rather than research, to suggest that their smaller size will lead to more personal attention, and to remind students that at a state college they will be instructed by experienced faculty and not by graduate teaching assistants.

Although with few exceptions the state colleges are comprehensive institutions offering both liberal arts and professional programs, emphasis is clearly upon preparing students for careers. This thrust is evident in all groups within the sector. For the older institutions and multi-colleges it represents a continuation of the teacher education tradition, although now new fields such as business predominate. Historically black colleges have always emphasized the role of education in preparing students to compete for employment in a discriminatory society, and the new colleges, many developed in urban areas during a period in which "relevance" was the watchword, often matched their programs to the expected vocational interests of their clienteles.

The liberal arts thus play a secondary role. They may assume greater importance in the future with renewed interest in "general education" as an essential degree component, although it is questionable whether concerns for improving competency in basic English and computational skills will eventually manifest themselves in more advanced humanities, science, and social science study. On some campuses, the liberal arts faculty have increasing difficulty in recruiting students interested in majoring in their areas; on others, liberal arts faculty see themselves as beleaguered "support departments," rather than as the college's intellectual core.

While many of these values derive from the traditions and expectations of the colleges themselves, they are reinforced by the college's existence as an agency of the state. Driven by enrollment-related funding formulas, and with few opportunities to buffer themselves financially against short-term reversals, the colleges to survive must offer what students want, regardless of what they may be thought to need. Faced with the unlimited demands for service on one side, and the harsh realities of public accountability on the other, the colleges may move away from a rhetoric of education and towards a rhetoric of administration and management. "Student credit hours per full-time equivalent faculty" becomes a term heard as often in the faculty lounge as in the president's office; fiscal exigency, layoff, and retrenchment becomes part of the argot as well as the environment; and discussion of access, quality, and other core values are displaced by contingency planning, new management systems, and the need to collect data for external accountability even though they may have little campus utility.

The Environment

Because of their mission, public control, and place in the higher education system, the state colleges will remain vulnerable to developing social, economic, and political forces. While many important environmental changes will surely take place, only the known decrease in the college-age cohort during the next 15 years, and the projected consequent decrease in college enrollments, can now be considered with any certainty.

In examining the potential effects of demographic changes upon various sectors of higher education, the Carnegie Council (1980) identified the state colleges as occupying a position of average to above-average vulnerability. This means that the

sector might expect an undergraduate enrollment decline by 1997 of approximately 10 to 15 per cent. Decreases at any specific college could be significantly larger, and would of course depend upon a number of factors such as location, program, and the existence of other institutions competing for the same applicant pool.

Institutional resources are dependent upon enrollments, and in the scramble for enrollments created by demographic trends the state colleges are likely not to fare well against either the community colleges, which are usually less expensive and more convenient, or the doctoral or system flagship universities which are more prestigious. The state colleges are also likely not to have the political clout of either of these other institutional types and so are less likely to increase the level of public appropriations upon which their budget depends. Local community college boards often have direct access to revenue sources or agencies. They are usually composed of men and women with important local political connections who can forcefully articulate their college's needs in the battle for community fiscal support, and who, both in terms of total numbers and connections, can be an important collective force in battling for additional resources at the state level as well. The trustees of research and flagship universities are fewer in number, but in many states occupy positions considered to be of great prestige and influence. They deal with legislative and executive bodies that often include as members large numbers of university undergraduate or law school alumni, and in addition may have a state-wide constituency developed through their university extension and outreach activities.

State college boards of trustees have neither the numbers and intensive local support of the community college system, nor in most cases the well-placed alumni or state-wide interest afforded the public university. In the past, the power of state colleges was often magnified by their close political relationships to state-wide teachers organizations. The state college's reduction of emphasis on education

programs has significantly diminished the strength of this traditional coalition, and in many cases eradicated it.

The lack of a strong political base means not only that the state colleges may have greater difficulty in acquiring resources, but also that they are easier targets for retrenchment. A recent study indicated that of 4,000 faculty members (1,200 with tenure) laid off or dismissed in the past five years in four-year colleges and universities, virtually all came either from state colleges or less-well-known private institutions (Scully, 1983).

In the search for new clientele, the state colleges are likely to try to strengthen their positions in technical education, life-long-learning, and community service, thus increasing their competition with community colleges. They are also likely to attempt expansion of their range of graduate offerings, particularly in professional areas, thus increasing their competition with the public universities. In both cases the political constraints they will encounter, from other institutions as well as from state coordinating boards, suggest that they are not likely to fare well.

The projected demographic changes, and the ensuing competition towards which it is likely to lead, will create many critical problems for the state colleges. As interest in career-related programs increases, issues such as the nature of general education, and the relationship of the colleges to business and industry will have to be addressed. Enrollment shifts may force consideration of the very survival of certain liberal arts departments, and raise questions concerning what the "minimum core" of the liberal arts must be. Greater interest in accepting transfer students from community collees may create increased difficulty in articulating programs to permit two-year students to transfer their previous work into the upper division, and

may tend to homogenize the general education components of both institutional types. And the state colleges will have to continue to experiment with new delivery systems and materials to respond to part-time, older students and other "new learner" populations, thus placing greater stress on already overloaded administrative structures and further reducing the possibility of developing a sense of campus community.

Resources

The personnel, facilities, and financial resources of individual state colleges are related to a number of variables including their history, location, and size.

State college faculty increasingly have terminal degrees in the areas in which they teach, although there are still smaller and more isolated campuses at which a faculty member with a doctorate is the exception rather than the rule. Along with other faculty, their purchasing power has been significantly eroded over the past decade. Average salaries in comprehensive state colleges in 1982-3 were $26,940, and in general baccalaureate state colleges $24,490 (American Association of University Professors, 1983). Their average salaries, as well as their salaries at each rank except instructor, were lower than those at public universities. The largest difference was at the full professor rank with universities averaging $38,180, comprehensive state colleges $33,490, and baccalaureate state colleges $30,770. The average teaching load is about 12 contact hours a week (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1983b), higher than the 6 to 9 hour loads typically expected of university faculty. State college faculty are quick to notice these differences in teaching responsibilities and compensation, particularly in systems in which both types of institution are controlled by a single board, and to recognise that they reflect public perception of the state college's place in the academic

pecking order.

Facilities run the gamut from outstanding to inadequate. In many states community college physical plants, more recently constructed and less constrained by the regulations of state building agencies, are both more attractive and more functional than those of the four-year colleges. Libraries, science laboratories, and areas for instruction in technological subjects in particular often were constructed at state colleges for a smaller and more specialized student body and may not have not been improved to support new activities adequately. Capital projects of any magnitude require approval at various levels of state government, and often depend upon voter approval of bond issues. The state colleges are usually at a political disadvantage when they attempt to compete with public universities for these funds.

Over the past decade, because of depressed economies and projections of enrollment downturns, states have been particularly reluctant to approve new college buildings, and it is unlikely that in the near future those institutions with significant capital needs will find any relief. At the same time, renovations and other maintenance needs have been deferred to effect short-term economies. Since it is politically easier to justify the maintenance of buildings than the maintenance of faculty, some colleges may be called upon over the next few years to make budget trade-offs, and cut faculty to support the physical plant.

Equipment budgets have been particularly problematic for many state colleges. The movement into new scientific and technological arenas has not always been accompanied by appropriate equipment support. Expensive machinery or electronic components may be viewed as "frills" and disallowed by state budget offices, even though they are critical to the development of a sound program. Many colleges rely as much on gifts of used equipment from industry as on their own operating budgets, when

they can get the equipment at all. Particularly when dealing with rapidly changing biological and physical sciences, and high technology areas such as computer science, the colleges often find themselves instructing students on badly out-of-date equipment no longer in use in the work place.

This equipment problem has been exacerbated in recent years by restricted state budget support, and the tendency of colleges when faced with budget constraints to transfer funds from equipment and other accounts to personnel accounts in order to maintain faculty positions. As a consequence, support for library books and equipment has become a critical issue for many campuses,.

The educational and general revenues for the state colleges in fiscal 1981 came primarily from state and local appropriations (64 per cent) and from tuition revenues (19 per cent), revenue sources that are highly sensitive to enrollment levels. Approximately 2 per cent of their revenues were from gifts and grants, 5 per cent from other sources, and 10 per cent from government grants and contracts, for a total of 17 per cent. In contrast, public university revenues in these latter three categories were 4, 7, and 15 per cent respectively, thus affording universities a larger buffer (26 per cent) against revenue losses caused by enrollment declines or vagaries of the state.

During the same year, the state colleges expended approximately $2,030 per student for instructional expenses and an additional $410 for academic support. It is virtually impossible to compare this with the expenditures of public universities, since university data do not separate expenditures for undergraduate and graduate students. Comparable figures for all public institutions indicate instructional expenditures of $2,240 and academic support of $410, but this is an average which incorporates a range of $1,421 and $230 at public community colleges on one hand, to

public research universities with medical schools at $3,520 and $829 on the other. When compared to private comprehensive and baccalaureate institutions, however, the expenditures of the state colleges for instruction are very similar. State colleges are likely to spend much more for public service, and much less in support of faculty research than are comparable private institutions.

The Chimera of Excellence

Excellence is easy to support, but difficult to define. Over the past 40 years it has come in higher education to refer to a rather narrow range of beliefs, activities, and outcomes, focussing attention primarily upon cognitive performance and meritocratic values. These are the characteristics of the "university colleges," which Jencks and Riesman (1968) identified as providing the model which other colleges aspire to, but can never really achieve.

Probably nowhere in American higher education is the discrepancy between aspiration and performance more apparent than at the state colleges. Dunham (1969) clearly identified the irony that the emerging transformation of their values (sometimes internally induced, sometimes externally imposed) had the potential of changing first-class teachers colleges into third-class universities. Probably to some extent this has happened. We must remain open to the possibility, however, that even third-class universities can have aspects of "excellence" if our definitions are expanded sufficiently to include a wider range of desirable values than are traditionally permitted.

The next two sections of this paper discuss environmental and internal aspects of state colleges that may inhibit their effectiveness. Before turning to them, however, it is necessary to consider some issues related to the dimensions of excellence and to

he measurement of performance.

The dimensions of excellence.

We commonly think of excellence in terms of the academic performance of students as measured by achievement tests, of faculty qualifications as reflected in scholarly accomplishment, or of the reputation of the institution. Compared to major universities and selective independent liberal arts colleges, state colleges must be judged on all these counts to be deficient. Such a judgment, however, tends to overlook at least four important issues. First, colleges have many goals, not just ostensibly academic ones. Second, academic goals themselves are often multiple, conflicting, and inconsistent. Third, the organizational and institutional structures and processes that facilitate the effective achievement of one goal often inhibit the achievement of another. There exists no college that can optimize achievement of all its goals. And fourth, perceptions of "excellence" depend on the constituency making the judgment. Legislators and parents, foundations and community groups, administrators and alumni, cosmopolitan faculty and locals, Merit Scholars and remedial students, and others are likely to have legitimate definitions that differ markedly.

The notion of excellence also tends to become confused with other ideas that appear equally desirable, if no less difficult to specify, such as "standards," "educational effectiveness," and "quality." Of these, the concepts of standards and quality appear to connote student requirements or achievements at or above a stated criterion, while excellence and effectiveness may be interpreted as related to the impact that an institution has upon improving performance. Since institutions have many purposes, it may be presumed that excellence or effectiveness may be of various kinds, and in fact one scholar has developed an instrument to measure nine "dimensions" of effectiveness as seen by various campus constituencies. These include

student educational satisfaction, student academic development, student career development, faculty and administration employment satisfaction, professional development and quality of faculty, system openness and community interaction, ability to acquire resources, and organizational health (Cameron, 1982). Of these, only two (student academic development and faculty quality), would appear to be related to commonly held notions of "excellence."

The relatively unidimensional views in rhetorical vogue today ironically ignore the pluralistic approach to values that John Gardner (1961) identified as a foundation of excellence when his book brought the word into academic currency. This does not mean that all values are of equal worth in an institution of higher education, but it does suggest that there is no universal definition that can be usefully employed.

The Measurement of Performance.

Even if we accept a narrow definition of excellence as involving only student intellectual outcomes, the problem of measuring excellence is not resolved. At least two approaches, criterion-referenced or value-added, can be taken. Using the former, we can presumably evaluate the comparative excellence of two institutions by measuring the knowledge or skills of the students they produce and comparing them to benchmarks. The institution whose students obtain the higher test scores would by definition have the greater degree of excellence.

The "value-added" concept looks at the extent to which student performance has changed as a result of the college experience rather than at the level of achievement reached. Institutions whose students evidenced the greatest amount of improvement would be judged excellent using this approach to measurement, regardless of the student's absolute performance level.

Comparisons of the quality of institutional student "outputs" indicate that they related to the quality of the student inputs so that relatively non-selective state colleges would be expected to have graduates with lower scores than the graduates of more selective institutions. However, there is no evidence to indicate that when the academic achievement of entering students is statistically controlled the performance of students graduating from state colleges is noticeably higher or lower than those at other types of institutions.

It would probably be accepted as a matter of faith that, in general, state colleges have not achieved the same level of "excellence" as have, for example, selective liberal arts colleges or flagship research universities. Given the earlier comments concerning correlates of student performance, it seems clear that public perceptions of excellence depend not on education process or on output but, rather, on input. High standards of admission are considered to be evidence of excellence. To a great extent this creates a no-win situation for state colleges: low admissions requirements and extensive remedial education lead to demands for "standards;" low admission requirements and high attrition call forth attacks upon the "revolving door." But raising admissions requirements challenges the essential mission of the colleges to offer access to students of varying background and abilities.

Considering the dimensions of these issues provides new ways of looking at the concept of "excellence." At some state colleges excellence will be achieved as a scholarly and proficient faculty provides instruction to well-prepared and sophisticated high school graduates and holds them to universalistic standards of performance. At others, excellence will mean that dedicated faculty will introduce provincial students for the first time to profound ideas that will transform some and be ignored by others. Excellence may also be found at a college which accepts disadvantaged students and in addition to providing basic skills and advanced

vocational and technical training also significantly improves their self image, feelings of competence, and dedication to community service. A state college can also find excellence in serving as a protective half-way house for potentially brilliant students who would be unable to cope immediately with a university environment, as a workshop in which students can experience racial integration for the first time and develop the understanding and tolerance necessary for helping to build a multicultural society, or as a training center from which business and industry can draw competent and stable students to fill technically demanding positions. Through various activities state colleges can also increase the aspirations of potential students, expand the cultural life of a community, assist it's economy, and provide opportunites for life-long learning. In these, and many other ways, "excellence" can be manifested, even if it cannot be precisely measured.

External Constraints on Excellence

While there may be disagreement concerning the dimensions of excellence, there are clearly a number of factors that make it difficult for some state colleges to be as effective as they might. Externally these factors include state/system coordination and control, funding provisions, and collective bargaining.

State coordination and control

During the past 15 years there has been an increasing tendency for decisions of campus importance to be made by groups external to the campus. In some states, individual state colleges have no independent board of trustees, and are controlled instead by a single consolidated governing board responsible for a system of two or more institutions. These systems sometimes also include institutions that are not state colleges. There are 118 state colleges (31 per cent of the total) functioning under such an arrangement. In addition, there are a large number of state colleges

that have their own trustees but that remain subject to the authority of a state coordinating board which has extensive budgeting and rule-making authority. Both consolidated governing bodies and state-wide coordinating agencies can be referred to generically as "superboards." In most cases, institutions in states without superboards are subject to similar control and review by other agencies of state government, particularly in their fiscal and capital operations.

The functioning of superboards tends to remove from direct campus control many critical aspects of institutional functioning, often including new program development, facilities planning, personnel policies, administrative structure, research activities, internal budget allocation, and the like. In the name of accountability such agencies can become exceptionally intrusive into the internal conduct of campus business. Moreover, the need to deal with a large number of disparate institutions leads to the creation of uniform regulations to bring presumed order out of apparent chaos and to offer the appearance of "fairness." Many such systems were created both to provide governmental oversight and to protect the campuses from improper governmental intrusion. The ambiguity of this charge is difficult to resolve to the mutual satisfaction of both campuses and governors, and faculty and administrators at many institutions are convinced that these agencies exist primarily to carry out the will of the state, rather than to protect important institutional interests. Superboard members are usually political appointees and, like all trustees, fulfill their responsibilities on a volunteer, part-time basis. As these systems have become more complex and difficult for lay persons to understand, effective influence has often shifted from superboards themselves to their staffs which do the day-to-day business. As the locus of functional authority moves sequentially from campus trustees, then to superboards, and finally to complex state bureaucracies, colleges may begin to operate more as regulated utilities than as institutions with an identifiable character, style, and environment.

It can be debated whether the decisions made by disinterested superboards, acting from a broader perspective and assisted by extensive staff expertise, are "better" than those made by local campuses with more parochial and presumably self-serving interests in mind. Even if there were data available to inform such arguments, they miss an essential point. Increasing limitations on campus autonomy lead to feelings of powerless, anger, and scapegoating on the part of college faculty and administration alike. Their sense of ownership of the enterprise is eroded, their profession becomes a job, and accountability disappears because authority is too diffused to be grasped. Faculty may find refuge in their personal interests; administrators may find it in adherence to rules and regulations. The acknowledged reduction in morale and levels of personal commitment is evident to the state, and is used to justify their further intrusion.

Funding provisions

State colleges have several common characteristics related to their funding arrangements: they are enrollment driven or enrollment related, they often have limited flexibility, they usually provide no incentives for prudent management, and they are uncertain. Each of these can severely constrain an institution's concern with excellence.

Enrollment related formulas as a primary mechanism for determining support levels for state colleges were a major advantage during the growth era of the recent past but are now a significant handicap as they enter a period of stability or decline. Although some states have moved beyond simple formulas towards more sophisticated models with time lag provisions, and others are attempting to develop non-enrollment related alternatives, for many state colleges little buffering from environmental shifts is available. The institutions thus remain extraordinarily

sensitive to market conditions. For survival purposes if for no others, issues related to student retention, grading, and transfer, for example, must be decided with an eye towards the impact upon enrollment as well as upon educational quality. Low enrollment programs, regardless of their educational merit, are particularly vulnerable not only from institutional administrators under pressure to reallocate resources but also from superboard staff members anxious to identify (and then to regulate) such "obvious" examples of inefficiency and organizational slack.

Regulations that limit flexibility often constrain the expenditure of funds even after they are allocated to a campus. Line items developed when a budget was originally planned 18 months earlier in many institutions cannot be utilized for the different purposes which a changed environment now requires, without extensive negotiation with, or approval by, various state agencies. Other rules (in areas such as purchasing for example) often prevent colleges from securing supplies and equipment not covered by master state purchase agreements, or require extended sequences of advertising and bidding with absurdly low dollar thresholds. These kinds of limits upon flexibility prevent administrators from responding to emerging needs in a timely manner, and contribute to feelings of powerlessness. They can also create tensions between administrators and faculty who, unaware of external constraints, are likely to attribute intolerable delays to inefficiency and lack of support for academic priorities on the part of campus administrators.

Incentives for prudent management are provided to colleges if monies saved by efficiencies in one area can be applied to another, and savings generated during one time period can be used in the future. At public institutions, inflexibility in making expenditures inhibits the former; the annual budget and appropriation cycles of the state usually prevent the latter. For most state colleges, funds must be spent in the year appropriated, and unexpended balances revert back to the state treasury.

This leads, at many campuses, to the traditional end-of-budget-year spending orgy for equipment and supplies, whether essential or not, to avoid unspent end-of-year balances. This apparent irrationality becomes understandable when it is realized that state budget offices may use the existence of unexpended balances (often created by their own Byzantine regulations) to reduce future budgets on the grounds that they indicate a lack of need.

Uncertainty in budget support is an accepted phenomenon in state college budgeting, but one which has recently taken on new dimensions. In the past, state colleges would typically plan their budgets in cycles beginning 18 months or more before the fiscal year, even though the actual appropriations would, in some cases, not be decided upon until the fiscal year was well underway. Under such circumstances, institutions had to be extremely conservative in making expenditure decisions, and positions often remained unfilled because they were approved too late to permit adequate recruitment. Once authorized, however, institutions could generally count on expending their annual budgets, subject only to the annoyances in some states of pre-audit controls, and the regular demands in other states for mandated savings during the current fiscal year.

Within the past few years, however, this has changed. Colleges in some states have been faced with the threat, and in some cases the actuality, of significantly altered budgets related to state fiscal crises during the course of the current fiscal year itself. In some cases the projected discontinuities have been great enough to lead superboards to propose changes in personnel policies that would permit the colleges to circumvent existing regulations concerning periods of notice for faculty nonreappointment, or to specify criteria for a declaration of "fiscal exigency" that would presumably permit the layoff of tenured faculty in response to sudden financial shortfalls. The effects on faculty morale of such proposals, let alone their

implementation, can be devastating.

Collective bargaining

Contracts with faculty unions exist on approximately one-third of all state college campuses, making it one of the most unionized sectors of American higher education. Although bargaining appears to be related to reduced institutional effectiveness (Cameron, 1982), it is likely that bargaining is a consequence of ineffectiveness rather than a cause. To a great extent, faculty interest in unionization is a defensive response to the feelings of powerlessness and loss of campus control related to the increased intrusion of the state already discussed. Once in place, however, bargaining may ironically tend to strengthen the centralization that spawned it. It may also accelerate tendencies towards uniformity (particularly in multicampus systems in which one contract is negotiated covering all institutions), towards loss of academic focus (particularly in those situations in which non faculty belong to -or are a majority of- the bargaining unit), and toward increased intrusion by the state (particularly in states in which "management" is represented at the bargaining table by a public official unrelated to the college administration or board).

Internal Constraints on Excellence

The status and expectations of faculty, and the background and preparation of students, are important internal considerations affecting institutional excellence.

The status and expectations of faculty

Probably the single most critical current faculty-related influence on organizational functioning is the high tenure density at many of the state colleges. Until recently, it was common practice to award tenure to almost all faculty members

completing the probationary period. Although aggregate data (NCES, 1980) indicate that approximately 62 per cent of full-time faculty in public four-year institutions are tenured (higher than the 54 per cent seen in all institutional types combined), a large number of the state colleges have a tenure density of between 75 and 90 per cent. This builds inflexibility into the system so it becomes difficult or impossible over the short term to adjust staffing allocations to respond to discontinuities in enrollment patterns. Even as enrollment in education, history, or English decreases, for example, no faculty positions are freed to support burgeoning enrollments and large classes in business and computer science. Tenure density poses a particular problem for the state colleges because they cannot increase flexibility through the use of graduate assistants as the universities do, nor do they rely on part-time instruction to the extent reportedly utilized by community colleges.

A related phenomenon is the tension that exists on some campuses between the "old" faculty, often from education or related areas, with doctorates (if they have them) from second-tier graduate institutions, little if any scholarly productivity, and senior rank, and the "new" faculty, often of lower rank, trained in research-oriented doctoral programs of national reputation, and recruited to bring their institution into the academic mainstream. These two groups are likely to have different expectations about the proper processes and criteria for personnel actions such as promotion, differing perceptions about the appropriate role of faculty in governance, and different views of what the role and mission of the institution should be. Given the frequent lack of a clear institutional identity there are often no consistent norms or values that can help to resolve these differences, and the contending parties may fall back upon bureaucratic or political mechanisms to arrange temporary working truces. If consensus cannot be developed on the relative emphasis that should be given to teaching (or the means of assessing it), or the importance of scholarship and publication, then by default seniority reigns. The old guard versus

young Turk conflict is present in its rawest form when junior faculty see themselves held to new standards of performance that were not applied to the senior faculty who now judge them, and high tenure densities mean a lower probability of achieving tenure, even for the best and the brightest of the newcomers.

Students

State college students cover a wide range of abilities and aspirations that in many ways makes them "typical" of higher education enrollment in general. Compared to freshmen at all institutions in 1983, for example, state college freshmen closely resembled overall averages in their political orientations, high school grade distribution and rank in class, family income distribution, high school courses taken, and the proportion planning to study for a higher degree (Astin et. al. , 1983). As with other freshmen, their major reasons for going to college were (in rank order) to get a better job, to learn more about things, and to make more money.

Approximately 39 per cent of state college freshmen report high school averages of B+ or higher, making them, on average, academically stronger than students in some institutional categories (for example, public community colleges at 27 per cent), but weaker than students at others (for example, public universities at 54 per cent). Approximately 21 per cent of the state college freshmen report high school grades of C+ or lower, identical to the national average but twice as high as in public universities. It is likely that at all levels of academic performance, but increasingly at lower grade levels, there are numbers of indifferent students for whom college is a socially acceptable means of marking time. It may even be that this number is increasing. Dispite concern for grade inflation over the decade, fewer state college freshmen in 1983 reported high school grades of B+ or higher, and more reported grades of C+ or lower than in 1973 (Astin, et.al. , 1973, 1983).

Conclusions About Excellence

An assessment of the present level of excellence in the state colleges to a great extent depends upon the definitions chosen and the reference groups selected. Although there are few hard data to support any clear conclusions, one would be hard pressed to develop a strong case that the alleged "rising tide of mediocrity" has diminished the effectiveness of the state colleges as a group. Indeed, both short-term and long-term evidence suggest the contrary.

Short-term data

An example of short-term data includes a recent survey of higher education institutions (Watkins, 1983b) in which chief academic officers reported that new faculty hired in 1981-2 were more competent than those hired a year earlier. These data, disaggregated for state colleges, indicated further that faculty were seen as more concerned about their teaching and student advisement responsibilities, more willing to innovate, and more productive in terms of research and scholarship than previously. Overall, 58 per cent of the respondents identified the quality of state college faculty performance as increasing, while only 3 per cent believed it to be decreasing. At the same time, it was reported that secretarial and related support for faculty was decreasing (although support for research was up), teaching load had slightly increased, and other workload responsibilities in advising, committee work, and related non-classroom functions, had become higher. In general, it appeared as if resources to support the enterprise had diminished, but quality, at least in terms of faculty performance, had increased.

A similar earlier survey (Minter and Bowen, 1980) compared the characteristics of state college faculty, students, and finances in 1979-80 with those of the previous year. Again, teaching load, advising, and committee responsibilities were all seen as

increasing, while secretarial and travel support were seen as decreasing. In addition, the survey asked state college chief academic officers, student personnel officers, senior faculty, student newspaper editors, and presidents of student bodies, to evaluate changes in the quality and content of educational programs during this time period. The general consensus of all groups (with the occasional disagreement of the student newspaper editor) was that there had been improvement in the overall quality of the learning environment, the quality, competence, and performance of the faculty, the rigor of academic standards, the availability of a wide range of student services, and creativity and innovation in teaching. Overall, the chief academic officers and chief student personnel officers of state colleges overwhelmingly reported an increase in the "overall quality of student learning." The presidents of these institutions reported the same patterns of increased effectiveness and decreased resources. Although almost 60 per cent of the presidents surveed said their institution was losing ground financially, 48 per cent said the academic condition of the institution was improving (none said it was losing ground), and 52 per cent noted an increase in the quality of student services.

Long-term data

The responses of college presidents must be reviewed with a good deal of caution. Presidents tend to be optimistic, particularly when reviewing changes of quality that have taken place under their stewardship and presumably as a consequence of their educational and fiscal leadership. Faculty, on the other hand, may tend to be much more critical about their institutions. For this reason, the results of a recent study (Anderson, 1983a) of faculty perceptions of changes in institutional functioning over the ten-year period from 1970 to 1980 is instructive. Based upon responses to the Institutional Functioning Inventory (IFI), state college faculty perceived improvements in a number of areas, including development of the intellectual and aesthetic extracurriculum, concern for undergraduate learning, and concern for

advancing knowledge on their campuses during this ten-year period. At the same time, they saw their colleges as becoming more diverse in terms of the backgrounds of students and faculty, and as being more concerned with meeting local needs than had been previously the case. In addition, there appeared to be a slight increase in faculty morale during this ten-year period, even though morale at these institutions continued to be among the lowest of all institutional types included in the study. A review of responses by state college faculty to specific IFI items (Anderson, 1983b) related to concern for undergraduate teaching indicates that, compared to 1970, faculty in 1980 were more concerned about how better to communicate knowledge to students, more willing to spend time talking to students about their personal concerns, more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of students, and more willing to consider teaching effectiveness in recruiting new faculty. Complementing this emphasis upon teaching, faculty also saw research and related scholarly activities being given greater emphasis by college administrations and boards, and reflected in an increase in faculty publications. When asked to respond to the item "The college is doing a successful job in achieving its various goals," 65 per cent of the faculty agreed in 1980, compared to 59 per cent in 1970.

If the quality of faculty and program is seen as improving, there is a general consensus that the quality of state college students, as defined by traditional measures, has been deteriorating. Scores of students on the Scholastic Aptitude Test declined moderately between 1970 and 1980, paralleling the decline seen in all other higher education sectors (Anderson, 1983a). Chief academic officers at state colleges report declines between 1978-79 and 1979-80 in the secondary school preparation of their students in reading, writing, and mathematical skills, and in preparation in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences (Minter and Bowen, 1980). More recent data collected from chief academic officers suggests that there has been little if any improvement in student preparation, even though academic standards and grading

practices are reported to be more rigorous (Watkins, 1983a).

Evaluating the level of excellence

There is a tendency to define a problem in terms of the availability of data. Recent dramatic criticisms of higher education pointing to test scores and relying on judgmental reports have tended to obscure the fact that there is a dearth of information that might more directly reflect educational quality. The data we now have available, which by default have become a proxy for the concept of excellence, do not tell us whether students are now learning more or less than in the past, whether the increase in remedial education has resulted in more or less social justice, whether graduates are more or less able to function as effective civic and occupational participants, or whether collectively and individually the state college student is more or less likely than in the past to lead a life of increased meaning and reward as a consequence of having attended. These are profound, and perhaps unanswerable questions. But a proper consideration of excellence requires that they at least be asked.

To some extent, present concern about the state college is a reflection of the continuing tension in this country between the concepts of mass and elite higher education. Critics of the level of excellence in the state colleges point to lower admissions averages and test scores, and increases in the number of remedial courses offered, as indicators of serious problems requiring attention. These criticisms are often leveled without recognition of the political and social context which led these institutions to become more flexible in offering admission to previously underrepresented groups and to take steps to ensure that for these underprepared students the open door offered reasonable opportunities for success. Other aspects of the state colleges can also be identified as mitigating the quality of the undergraduate experience. For example, characteristics thought to be related to

quality such as small institutional size, continuity of program and staff, and a clear and coherent institutional purpose (Kuh, 1981) are not often found in state colleges.

It is useful to examine the condition of excellence in the state colleges, and to ask how they might be improved. At the same time, considering their political and financial constraints, their heterogeneous student bodies, and the many conflicting claims on their resources and energies, an equally intriguing question is how they have managed to be as successful as they have been. Care must be taken lest well-meaning proposals for improving excellence at these institutions inadvertently disrupt those aspects of institutional functioning that have permitted the creditable performance of a most difficult task.

The major thrust of recommendations by national as well as by state-wide commissions and study groups to improve the quality of the state colleges appears to focus attention upon raising admissions standards, and on moving towards the elimination of remedial courses at the college level. These are appealing ideas to some, not only because they begin to clarify some of the differentiation between secondary and higher education which may have been eroded over the past decade, but also because they are likely to reduce enrollments and save, rather than cost, state funds. This position appears even to have been adopted by AASCU (1983a) as reported with approval in an information bulletin under the headline "Educational Standards Alive and Well in State Colleges and Universities:"

> Tougher college-admissions standards are being put into place at state colleges and universities around the country. There are many reasons for these tighter standards. In many states, severe budget cuts have forced colleges and universities to curtail enrollments. Raising standards has proved to be an effective approach to solving this problem. By raising admission standards, higher education institutions also hope to shift some or all of the expensive remedial programs they now administer back to the secondary schools. Employers have become vocal in

requesting that colleges and universities produce better quality students.

The nature of the proposed solutions puts into bold relief the underlying values accompanying the concept of "excellence." The solutions appear to accept a criterion-referenced rather than a value-added approach, and to take a unidimensional rather than a multidimensional view. They also seem to accept the notion that quality can be improved by inspection rather than built in by the application of resources to students, and that excellence can be can be appropriately addressed by controlling the input rather than by improving the delivery systems and strengthening the educational process.

Two polar views can be taken towards the appropriate way of achieving excellence in the state colleges—one remedial, the other developmental. The remedial approach finds great deficiencies in the quality of the state colleges that must be corrected through bold initiatives. These include delimiting the mission of the colleges with greater precision, raising admissions standards, requiring satisfactory student scores on achievement tests as a condition for moving from sophomore to junior status, further centralizing program development and curriculum evaluation processes to assure uniform application of traditional quality standards, and abolishing tenure or reducing the time required for notice of faculty nonreappointment to make allocation of personnel resources more responsive to student interests and needs. Each of these structural changes might increase excellence as traditionally defined but could also have significant, unintended, and unavoidable negative and long-term consequences. For example, centralizing program criteria and review processes could stifle innovation, and abolishing tenure would almost certainly reduce faculty esprit and institutional commitment, and lead to an increase in faculty militantism. And while erecting barriers to access will raise test scores, at the same time it is likely to reduce social equity, or raise the level of national discourse.

The developmental approach recognizes that the condition of the state colleges is the result of many societal and educational forces over which the coleges have had relatively little control. To try to delimit the goals of these institutions is in a real sense an attempt to delimit the goals of the complex, multi-faceted society that these colleges have been asked to serve; this is seldom possible to do, and usually dangerous to try. The developmental alternative is to maintain the present configuration of these colleges and to attempt to improve them at the margins. Fiscal support for programs and activities that enrich and refresh tired faculty, equipment quality and quantity that demonstrates societal commitment to the education of the young, enough budget slack to make life more pleasant but not luxurious, and sufficient autonomy to encourage people of talent and conviction to consider campus administration as a career—each of these could make a real contribution to state college excellence, however defined.

Notes

NOTE 1. Using the new classification system of the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), "State Colleges" include 256 public colleges identified as "Comprehensive Institutions," and 121 categorized as "General Baccalaureate Institutions." The concept of "comprehensive" as used by NCES refers to the extent to which an institution offers post-baccalaureate, non-doctoral programs. In contrast, in this paper the term "comprehensive" is used to refer to institutions characterized by a mix of liberal arts and professional programs such that no more than 80 per cent of its degrees are awarded in either category.

NOTE 2. Unless otherwise identified, statistics contained in this paper have been calculated by the author from data supplied by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) from current NCES data tapes.

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